

UNCLASSIFIED

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00  
DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 CU-02  
AID-05 DHA-02 IO-13 /074 W

R 262007Z JUL 76  
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6493

[REDACTED] BUENOS AIRES 4875

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: SCUL, SHUM, PINT, AR  
SUBJECT: CHURCH LEADERS CALL ON PRESIDENT VIDELA

REF: (A) BUENOS AIRES 4797; (B) BUENOS AIRES 4617

1. CARDINALS ARAMBURU AND PRIMATESTA, WITH OTHER HIGH CHURCHMEN OF EXECUTIVE COMMISSION OF CATHOLIC EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE, CALLED ON PRESIDENT VIDELA JULY 22 TO RECEIVE RESPONSE TO MESSAGE SENT TO JUNTA BY COMMISSION ON JULY 7. IN THAT MESSAGE THE CHURCH HAD EXPRESSED ALARM AND CONCERN OVER VIOLENCE IN ARGENTINA, BY INFERENCE ESPECIALLY KILLING OF FIVE PRIESTS JULY 4.

2. WRITTEN REPLY TO CHURCH MESSAGE HAS NOT BEEN RELEASED. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, VIDELA IS UNDERSTOOD TO HAVE AVOIDED SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO DEATHS OF PRIESTS, INCLUDING TWO MORE KILLED JULY 21 (REFTTEL). HE ALLEGEDLY RECOGNIZED CHURCH CONCERN OVER VIOLENCE, AND INSISTED ON THEORY THAT THERE IS PLOT TO DAMAGE RELATIONS BETWEEN CHURCH AND GOA. QUESTION OF DETAINEES AND LACK OF INFORMATION CONCERNING THEM WAS ALSO REPORTEDLY RAISED.

3. AFTER MEETING, INTERIOR MINISTRY RELEASED STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO WHAT IT DESCRIBED AS RUMORS CIRCULATING ABOUT [REDACTED]

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ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPs

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

( ) Release ( ) Excise ( ) Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: ( ) In Part ( ) In Full ~~DECLASSIFIED~~

( ) Classify as ( ) Extend as ( ) Downgrade to

Date Declassify on Reason

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DETENTIONS OF LARGE NUMBERS OF PRIESTS. MINISTRY RELEASE SAID THAT TEN PRIESTS ARE DETAINED, SIX OF WHOM WERE DETAINED UNDER PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT BEFORE MILITARY TOOK POWER ON MARCH 24.

4. COMMENT. IN PRIVATE, CHURCH IS SPEAKING STRONGLY TO GOA ON GENERAL HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION AND ESPECIALLY OVER MURDERS OF PRIESTS. CHURCH IS AWARE THAT AT LEAST FIRST FIVE PRIESTS WERE KILLED BY MEMBERS OF POLICE, AND WE KNOW THAT CHURCH MADE DIRECT ACCUSATION OF THIS TO MINISTER OF INTERIOR AFTER FIRST KILLINGS. IN PUBLIC, CHURCH IS TAKING MUCH MORE CAUTIOUS LINE, OBVIOUSLY IN BELIEF THAT OPEN CONFRONTATION WITH GOA WOULD BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE. CHAPLIN

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